# Transcript of the video ‘The bigger picture’

I think when you're doing work from your PhD in particular, one of the things you've got to try and do is see your work in a broader perspective. Sometimes people get kind of tunnel vision around the work that they're doing.

So I'll just give you an example. There's a famous piece in *Administrative Science Quarterly* about zoo-keepers. Now you might think if you're publishing about zoo-keepers, you should publish in a zoo-keeping journal, but actually it's a paper about zoo-keepers and the notion of career as a calling; so it's very much about jobs, and about how people see their jobs.

The paper was about how zoo-keepers see their work; it's both a blessing and a kind of a curse, the curse is because they're so invested in it, because it's a calling they work longer hours and so on. The blessing is, you know, they're very happy with doing the work, working with animals, and so on and so forth. So the paper on zoo-keepers becomes a paper about careers which has relevance to the professions; law, medicine, and so on and so forth.

So don't just look at what you've done, look very much at what it means and how you might connect with different bodies of literature because that really kind of open things out. So don't think ‘I've done zoo-keepers, I must publish in zoo-keeping or animal husbandry’, or whatever it is – think about the broader contribution.

When you're writing for journals, take account of human nature. So writing for a journal is a little bit of a sales pitch as well. So when you're writing for the journal, it's got to look as if you want to be in that journal.

It's a bit like applying for a job. Okay, you apply for a job at Harvard, or at MIT; you don't get it. You go to another institution, and they ask you why you're applying for this job. You don't say ‘well I tried to get into Harvard and MIT, but they wouldn't have me so, you know, thought I'd give you guys ago’.

That's not going to work. It's the same with a journal. They don't want to know – they may guess – but they don't want to know that actually you've dropping down a list of journals. You can’t get in these journals; so you're going to try this one. They want to know you want to publish in this journal.

So you want to make it look as if your piece belongs in this journal, not it's been somewhere else and now you're slinging it in here. And that really requires that you locate your work within the body of work within that particular journal.

So human nature is important here.

The key thing for getting the journal paper through is contribution: what's your contribution? What are you saying new, which we didn't know before? And that's absolutely the critical piece for most journal papers; what's your specific contribution?

And somewhere in your paper, preferably on the first page, you set that out; you set out what is your contribution? How are you advancing knowledge within the particular field?

And that's a really important thing to do when you're writing a paper because it’s quite easy to fill up 8,000 or 10,000 words, cut and paste it from parts of your PhD or your research. But what is your contribution? Editors make very quick decisions on whether to send papers out to review, you’ve kind of got to impress them on page one – that this paper belongs in this journal and it's got to pass a threshold of the contribution.